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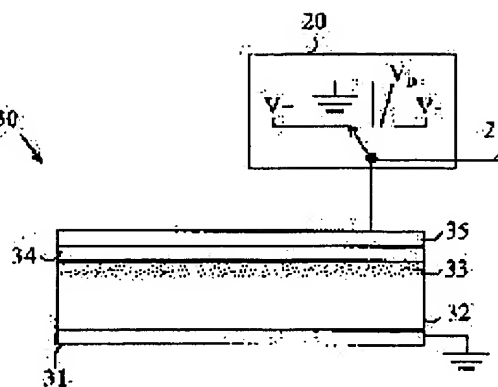
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(54) OPTICAL INTERCONNECTION SWITCH

(57)Abstract:

PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: To provide an optical interconnection switch which gives a large deflection angle at a fast rate.

SOLUTION: An optical switching member having an $N \times M$ array is prepared to transmit optical signals between optical fibers with N input ports and M output ports. Each optical switching member consists of a switching material layer 34, first and second transparent electrodes 32, 35 covering the switching material layer, and hydrogen storage material layer 33 adjacent to the switching material layer. The switching material has first and second states, and it is transparent for optical signals in the first state and reflects optical signals in the second state. The state of the switching material is determined by the hydrogen concentration in the material. When a first potential is applied between the first and second electrodes, the hydrogen storage material supplies hydrogen to the switching material, and when a second potential is applied between the first and second electrodes, it absorbs hydrogen from the switching



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【0008】さらに、この発明の目的は、機械的な機械に基づいたシステムよりも高速で切り換えられる光相互接続スイッチの提供にある。

【0009】さらにこの発明の他の目的は、大きな偏向角度を与える光相互接続スイッチの提供にある。

【0010】これらのおよびその他のこの発明による目的は、この発明の実施例および図面の詳細な説明から当業者には明らかであろう。

【0011】

【課題を解決するための手段】この発明は、N本の入力光ファイバとM本の出力光ファイバとの間で光信号を通信するための光相互接続スイッチである。スイッチは、 $N \times M$ 配列の光学的切換部材からなり、それぞれの光学的切換部材は、光信号を入力光ファイバの一つから出力光ファイバの一つに送る。それぞれの光学的切換部材は、切換材料の層と、切換材料の層を被覆する第1および第2の透明な電極と、および、切換材料の層に隣接する水素貯蔵材料の層とからなる。切換材料は、第1および第2の状態を備える。切換材料は、第1の状態において光信号に対して透明であるとともに第2の状態において光信号を反射する。この切換材料の状態は、材料中の水素濃度によって定められる。水素貯蔵材料は、第1の電位差が第1および第2の電極に与えられたとき前記切換材料に水素を供給し、および、第2の電位差が第1および第2の電極に与えられたとき切換材料から水素を吸収する。切換材料は、アルカリ、アルカリ土類、希土類金属、および、それらの合金および水素化物のグループから選択された材料であることが望ましい。

【0012】

【発明の実施の形態】この発明は、アルカリ、アルカリ土類、希土類金属の水素化物に基づいている。これらの金属は、水素ガスに暴露することで水素化物を形成する。これら水素化物は、各層が十分に薄いときは透明であるような絶縁性化合物である。ランタンおよびイットリウムの場合、金属は、 MH_2 、 MH_3 である二つの水素化物の状態が存在できる。この二つの水素化物の状態は、水素の圧力を変化させることによって一方から他方へと容易に変換可能である。この2-水素化物状態は、部分的に充填された導電帯を備え、従って、反射鏡として働く。この3-水素化物状態は、透明な絶縁体である。

【0013】この発明の作用は、この発明による光相互接続スイッチ10の断面図である第1図を参照するとより容易に理解できる。スイッチ10は、12で示され

9で示される。それぞれの列における切換部材の数は、出力光ファイバの数に等しい。それぞれの切換部材は、入射した光信号を反射する反射鏡として機能する「反射鏡」状態と、光信号を部材が通過させる「透明」状態からなる二つの状態を有している。この反射鏡状態にあるこれらの切換部材は、第1図において実線で示されており、他方、透明状態にあるこれらの切換部材は、点線で示されている。従って、切換部材15は、入力光ファイバ17を通路11を經由して出力光ファイバ18に接続し、他方、切換部材16は、入力光ファイバ17からの光を切換部材15に通過させる。

【0014】この切換部材の構成方法は、この発明による切換部材30の断面図である第2図を参照するとさらに容易に理解できる。切換部材30は、透明電極32および35の間に配置された金属水素化物層34からなる。水素源領域33は、金属水素化物層34に隣接して配置されている。電極35の電位が、電極32に対して負であるとき、水素イオンは、源領域33から金属水素化物層34に移動する。電位差が逆転すると、水素イオンは、金属水素化物層34を去って源領域33に戻る。回路20のような切換回路が、それぞれの切換部材に対して設けられ、この切換回路は、制御線21上の信号によって制御される。ある金属水素化物に関しては、水素化物中の水素濃度を一定レベルに維持するためにバイアス電位 V_0 を必要とする。

【0015】この発明の実施例においては、それぞれの切換部材は、反射防止コーティング31も含んでおり、空気と透明電極との間の屈折率の差による切換部材の表面からの光の反射を防止している。このようなコーティングを設けないと、それぞれの切換部材に入射する光の小部分が、光ファイバ中に反射されることになる。このような信号は、出力光ファイバのノイズのレベルに影響し、従って、回避されねばならない。

【0016】多くの水素化合物を切換部材を構成するために用いることができる。例えば、ランタン、ガドリニウム、および、イットリウムの水素化物である。水素の添加により、 LaH_2 は、 LaH_3 に、 YH_2 は、 YH_3 に変化する。さらに、この化合物のMg合金も用いることができる。2-水素化物状態においては、これらの化合物は、金属的である。3-水素化物状態は、絶縁体状態であるかあるいは半導体状態である。

【0017】透明電極は、インジウムスズ酸化物などの透明導電体あるいは適当にドーパされたGaAsなどの透明な半導体から構成される。

【0018】源の水素化合物源が、透明電極と、水素

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る。

【0019】この発明の上述の実施例は、平面状の切換部材を使用している。しかしながら、当該技術に通常の知識を有する者で配列は、上述の説明からその他の形状に容易に到達することができよう。例えば、切換部材のそれぞれは、切換部材に関係する対応する入力光ファイバから対応する出力光ファイバに光を伝達するために放物状の反射鏡のような形状に到達することができよう。

【0020】この発明の種々の変形は、上述の説明および添付の図面に基づいて、当該技術に通常の知識を有する者には明らかであろう。従って、この発明の広汎な応用の参考に供するため、以下に本発明の実施態様を例示する。

【0021】（実施態様1）：N本の入力光ファイバ（12）とM本の出力光ファイバ（14）との間で光信号を通信するための光相互接続スイッチ（10）において、N×M配列の光学的切換部材（15、16）を設け、それぞれの光学的切換部材（15、16）は、光信号を前記入力光ファイバ（12）の一つから前記出力光ファイバ（14）の一つに送り、それぞれの光学的切換部材（15、16）は、切換材料の層（34）と、前記切換材料の層（34）を被覆する第1および第2の透明な電極（32、35）と、および、前記切換材料の層（34）に隣接する水素貯蔵材料（33）の層とを有し、前記切換材料は、第1および第2の状態を備え、該第1の状態において前記光信号に対して透明であるとともに前記第2の状態において前記光信号を反射し、前記第1、第2の状態は、前記切換材料中の水素濃度によって定められ、前記水素貯蔵材料は、第1の電位差が前記第1および第2の電極（32、35）に与えられたとき前記切換材料に水素を供給し、第2の電位差が前記第1および第2の電極（32、35）に与えられたとき前記*

* 切換材料から水素を吸収するようにした光相互接続スイッチ（10）。

【0022】（実施態様2）：前記水素貯蔵材料が、KOHからなるようにした実施態様1に記載の光相互接続スイッチ（10）。

【0023】（実施態様3）：前記水素貯蔵材料が、水素イオンを埋め込まれた透明な導体からなるようにした実施態様1に記載の光相互接続スイッチ（10）。

【0024】（実施態様4）：前記切換材料が、アルカリ、アルカリ土類、希土類金属、および、その水素化物のグループから選択された材料からなるようにした実施態様1に記載の光相互接続スイッチ（10）。

【0025】（実施態様5）：前記光学的切換部材（15、16）が、前記切換部材が前記第2の状態にあるときは前記光信号を反射する平面からなるようにした実施態様1に記載の光相互接続スイッチ（10）。

【0026】（実施態様6）：前記光学的切換部材（15、16）が、前記第2の状態にあるとき、対応する入力光ファイバから対応する出力光ファイバに像を結ぶ放物面からなるようにした実施態様1に記載の光相互接続スイッチ（10）。

【図面の簡単な説明】

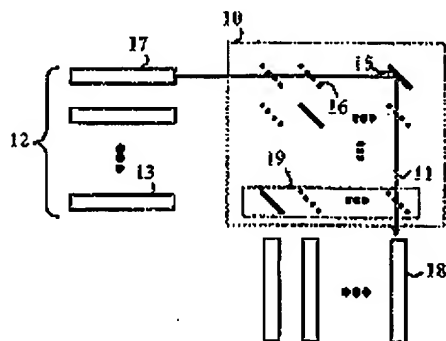
【図1】この発明による光相互接続の断面図である。

【図2】この発明による切換部材30の断面図である。

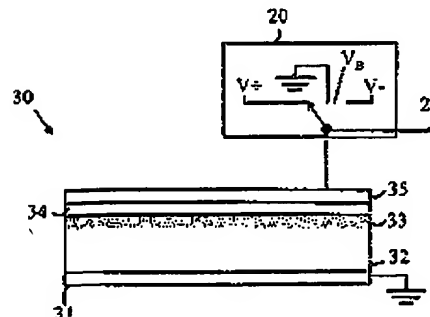
【符号の説明】

- 10 相互接続スイッチ
- 12 光ファイバ
- 14 光ファイバ
- 15 16 光学的切換部材
- 32 35 電極
- 33 水素貯蔵材料
- 34 切換材料の層

【図1】



【図2】



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フロントページの続き

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CLAIMS

[Claim(s)]

[Claim 1] In the optical interconnect switch for communicating a lightwave signal between the input optical fiber of N book, and the output optical fiber of M book, the optical change-over member of a NxM array is prepared. each optical change-over member A lightwave signal from one of said the input optical fibers to one of said the output optical fibers delivery and each optical change-over member It has the 1st [which covers the layer of a change-over ingredient, and the layer of said change-over ingredient], and 2nd transparent electrodes, and the layer of the hydrogen storage ingredient which adjoins the layer of said change-over ingredient. Said change-over ingredient It has the 1st and 2nd conditions, and while it is transparent to said lightwave signal in this 1st condition, said lightwave signal is reflected in said 2nd condition. Said 1st and 2nd condition It is set with the hydrogen concentration in said change-over ingredient. Said hydrogen storage ingredient The optical interconnect switch it was made to absorb hydrogen from said change-over ingredient when hydrogen was supplied to said change-over ingredient when the 1st potential difference is given to said 1st and 2nd electrodes, and the 2nd potential difference was given to said 1st and 2nd electrodes.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[Detailed Description of the Invention]

[0001]

[Field of the Invention] This invention relates to optical interconnect ITCHI for communicating a lightwave signal in a detail further about an optical change-over device.

[0002]

[Description of the Prior Art] An optical fiber can give a high-speed bit rate farther than an electronic path. However, in order to use the big bandwidth of a proper for an optical signalling channel effectively, an optical crossover switch is required. In typical communication environment, the change-over of the signal between optical fibers uses the electric interconnect switch. A lightwave signal is first changed into an electrical signal. After an electrical signal is switched, a signal is again returned to a lightwave signal and is sent through an optical fiber. In order to obtain a high throughput, an electric interconnect switch has high parallelism and an expensive change-over configuration is used. However, even if it uses such a syntropy, an interconnect switch still remains as a trouble.

[0003] Although many optical interconnect switches are proposed, there is still nothing that fills the demand to a reliable optical interconnect switch with low cost. The thing of an optical interconnect switch of a certain kind uses wavelength division multiplex-ization (WDM) for switching. However, this kind of system must switch a lightwave signal to different wavelength. In a system [as / all whose lightwave signals are the same wavelength], this kind of system must change and switch the HARASHIN number to desired wavelength, and, subsequently to the original wavelength, must reconvert it. This transform processing makes a system complicated and leads to a cost rise.

[0004] Another optical interconnect switch of a type is using the total reflection (TIR) change-over member. The TIR component consists of waveguide equipped with the boundary which can be switched. This boundary is divided into the field equipped with a refractive index which is completely different in two fields in the 1st condition. In this condition, it is reflected on a boundary and light is changed in a direction. In the 2nd condition, two fields divided by the boundary are equipped with the same refractive index, and light passes through a boundary straightly. It depends for the magnitude of direction change on the difference of the refractive index of these two fields. In order to produce change of a big direction, the field of the boundary back must be able to switch to the refractive index equal to a refractive index and the refractive index which was greatly far apart of waveguide.

[0005] Since the TIR component of the conventional technique of performing big change to a refractive index works so that the ingredient of the boundary back may be changed mechanically, a change-over rate is comparatively slow. Moreover, a problem is in dependability at mechanical equipment. For example, the optical interconnect based on the array of the crossing in waveguide is stated to the U.S. Pat. No. 5204921 specification by Kanai etc. The slot in each crossing is turned on and off according to whether it fills up with the slot with index matching liquid. Index matching liquid is equipped with the refractive index near the refractive index of waveguide. The lightwave signal sent via waveguide is sent from a crossing, when filling up with the slot with index matching liquid, but a signal changes the direction at a crossing by total reflection, when a slot is empty. In order to change a crossing change-over configuration, it must fill up with a slot and must be carried out in ** and the sky. In the equipment described in this invention, a "robot" is filled up with a slot or makes it empty. In order to move a liquid from the gap in the crossing of the 1st optical waveguide and the 2nd optical waveguide, the consideration in early stages of this kind of TIR component which performs thermal excitation is stated to the U.S. Pat. No. 5699462 specification. However, the change-over rate of this equipment was still comparatively slow, therefore equipment was limited to the application by

which the change-over rate of dozens msec is permitted.

[0006] The TIR component of a very quick change-over rate is also known. These members add electric field to an ingredient [as / the refractive index of whose is the function of electric field], and change the refractive index of the ingredient of the boundary back to it. For example, on the U.S. Pat. No. 5078478 specifications, the TIR component by which waveguide is constituted from an ingredient of a ferroelectricity is indicated. The refractive index of the ferroelectric material along the boundary in waveguide is changed by adding the electric field which cross a part of waveguide. Although this kind of equipment switches by the nanosecond, change of a refractive index is very slight, therefore the direction of light is made to only carry out abundance change. Interconnect which the deviation of this magnitude complicates the design of a crossing array, therefore has the marketability based on this technique is not realized yet.

[0007]

[Problem(s) to be Solved by the Invention] In large semantics, the purpose of this invention is in the improved optical interconnect switch.

[0008] Furthermore, the purpose of this invention is in offer of the optical interconnect switch switched rather than the system based on a mechanical device at high speed.

[0009] Furthermore, other purposes of this invention are in offer of the optical interconnect switch which gives a big deflecting angle.

[0010] Probably it reaches and these purposes by these other invention will be clear to this contractor from detailed explanation of the example of this invention, and a drawing.

[0011]

[Means for Solving the Problem] this invention is an optical interconnect switch for communicating a lightwave signal between the input optical fiber of N book, and the output optical fiber of M book. A switch consists of an optical change-over member of a NxM array, and each optical change-over member sends a lightwave signal to one of the output optical fibers from one of the input optical fibers. Each optical change-over member consists of a layer of the hydrogen storage ingredient which adjoins the layer of the 1st [which covers the layer of a change-over ingredient, and the layer of a change-over ingredient], and 2nd transparent electrodes, and a change-over ingredient. A change-over ingredient is equipped with the 1st and 2nd conditions. The change-over ingredient reflects a lightwave signal in the 2nd condition while it is transparent to a lightwave signal in the 1st condition. The condition of this change-over ingredient is defined with the hydrogen concentration in an ingredient. A hydrogen storage ingredient absorbs hydrogen from a change-over ingredient, when hydrogen is supplied to said change-over ingredient when the 1st potential difference is given to the 1st and 2nd electrodes, and the 2nd potential difference is given to the 1st and 2nd electrodes. As for a change-over ingredient, it is desirable that it is the ingredient chosen from the group of alkali, an alkaline earth, rare earth metals, those alloys, and a hydride.

[0012]

[Embodiment of the Invention] This invention is based on the hydride of alkali, an alkaline earth, and a rare earth metal. These metals form a hydride by being exposed to hydrogen gas. When these hydrides have each class thin enough, it is the insulating compound which is transparent. In the case of a lanthanum and an yttrium, a metal can exist in the state of two hydrides which are MH₂ and MH₃. The condition of these two hydrides is easily convertible for another side from one side by changing the pressure of hydrogen. This 2-hydride condition is equipped with the conducting sleeve with which it filled up partially, therefore commits it as a reflecting mirror. This 3-hydride condition is a transparent insulator.

[0013] If Fig. 1 which is a sectional view of the optical interconnect switch 10 by this invention is referred to, he can understand an operation of this invention more easily. A switch 10 forms optical connection between the array of the input optical fiber shown by 12, and the array of the output optical fiber shown by 14. A switch 10 is the array of a change-over member. The example of a change-over member is shown by 15 and 16. The switch 10 is equipped with the train of the change-over member corresponding to an input optical fiber in each. The train of the change-over member corresponding to the input optical fiber 13 is shown by 19. The number of the change-over members in each train is equal to the number of output optical fibers. Each change-over member has two conditions which consist of "reflecting mirror" conditions of functioning as a reflecting mirror which reflects the lightwave signal which carried out incidence, and "transparence" conditions that a member passes a lightwave signal. These change-over members in this reflecting mirror condition are shown by the continuous line in Fig. 1, and these change-over members in another side

and a transparence condition are shown by the dotted line. Therefore, the change-over member 15 connects the input optical fiber 17 to the output optical fiber 18 via a path 11, and another side and the change-over member 16 make the change-over member 15 pass the light from the input optical fiber 17.

[0014] If Fig. 2 which is a sectional view of the change-over member 30 by this invention is referred to, he can understand the configuration approach of this change-over member still more easily. The change-over member 30 consists of a metal hydride layer 34 arranged among transparent electrodes 32 and 35. The source field 33 of hydrogen adjoins the metal hydride layer 34, and is arranged. To an electrode 32, when the potential of an electrode 35 is negative, it moves a hydrogen ion to the metal hydride layer 34 from the source field 33. If the potential difference is reversed, a hydrogen ion will leave the metal hydride layer 34, and will return to the source field 33. A change-over circuit like a circuit 20 is prepared to each change-over member, and this change-over circuit is controlled by the signal on the control line 21. About a certain metal hydride, in order to maintain the hydrogen concentration in a hydride on fixed level, the bias potential VB is needed.

[0015] In the example of this invention, each change-over member also includes antireflection coating 31, and has prevented reflection of the light from the front face of the change-over member by the difference of the refractive index between air and a transparent electrode. If such coating is not prepared, the element of the light which carries out incidence to each change-over member will be reflected into an optical fiber. Such a signal influences the level of the noise of an output optical fiber, therefore must be avoided.

[0016] Since a change-over member is constituted, many hydride can be used. For example, they are a lanthanum, a gadolinium, and the hydride of an yttrium. LaH_2 changes to LaH_3 and YH_2 changes with addition of hydrogen to YH_3 . Furthermore, Mg alloy of this compound can also be used. In 2-hydride condition, these compounds are metallic. or [that 3-hydride condition is in an insulator condition] -- or it is in a semi-conductor condition.

[0017] A transparent electrode consists of transparent semi-conductors, such as transparence conductors, such as an indium stannic-acid ghost, or GaAs doped suitably.

[0018] The various sources of a hydride can be used. The source of a hydride takes the form of gel, a liquid, or a solid-state. For example, 5M NaOH or a KOH solution can use it in the state of a liquid or gel. The ion implantation of the amorphous layer of GaAs can also be used. The impregnation depth of about 100nm can be used in injection rate $>10^{15}$ hydrogen ion / cm^2 .

[0019] The plane change-over member is being used for the above-mentioned example of this invention. However, other configurations can be easily reached from ***** and above-mentioned explanation by those who have the usual knowledge on the technique concerned. For example, each of a change-over member can reach a configuration like a parabolic reflecting mirror, in order to transmit light to the output optical fiber which corresponds from the corresponding input optical fiber related to a change-over member.

[0020] Probably, various deformation of this invention will be clear to those who have the usual knowledge on the technique concerned based on above-mentioned explanation and an attached drawing. Therefore, in order to present reference of extensive application of this invention, the embodiment of this invention is illustrated below.

[0021] In the optical interconnect switch (10) for communicating a lightwave signal between the input optical fiber (12) of N book, and M output optical fibers (14) (Embodiment 1) The optical change-over member (15 16) of a NxM array is prepared. Each optical change-over member (15 16) A lightwave signal from one of said the input optical fibers (12) to one of said the output optical fibers (14) delivery and each optical change-over member (15 16) The 1st [which covers the layer (34) of a change-over ingredient, and the layer (34) of said change-over ingredient], and 2nd transparent electrodes (32 35), It has the layer of the hydrogen storage ingredient (33) which adjoins the layer (34) of said change-over ingredient. And said change-over ingredient It has the 1st and 2nd conditions, and while it is transparent to said lightwave signal in this 1st condition, said lightwave signal is reflected in said 2nd condition. Said 1st and 2nd condition It is set with the hydrogen concentration in said change-over ingredient. Said hydrogen storage ingredient The optical interconnect switch it was made to absorb hydrogen from said change-over ingredient when hydrogen was supplied to said change-over ingredient when the 1st potential difference is given to said 1st and 2nd electrodes (32 35), and the 2nd potential difference was given to said 1st and 2nd electrodes (32 35) (10).

[0022] : (Embodiment 2) An optical interconnect switch given in the embodiment 1 it was made for said hydrogen storage ingredient to become from KOH (10).

[0023] : (Embodiment 3) An optical interconnect switch given in the embodiment 1 it was made for said hydrogen storage ingredient to become from the transparent conductor which had the hydrogen ion embedded (10).

[0024] : (Embodiment 4) An optical interconnect switch given in the embodiment 1 it was made for said change-over ingredient to become from alkali, an alkaline earth, a rare earth metal, and the ingredient chosen from the group of the hydride (10).

[0025] : (Embodiment 5) It is an optical interconnect switch given in the embodiment 1 it was made for said optical change-over member (15 16) to become from the flat surface in which said lightwave signal is reflected when said change-over member is in said 2nd condition (10).

[0026] : (Embodiment 6) An optical interconnect switch given in the embodiment 1 it was made to consist of a paraboloid which connects an image to the output optical fiber which corresponds from a corresponding input optical fiber when said optical change-over member (15 16) is in said 2nd condition (10).

[Translation done.]

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DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

[Drawing 1] It is the sectional view of the optical interconnect by this invention.

[Drawing 2] It is the sectional view of the change-over member 30 by this invention.

[Description of Notations]

10 Interconnect Switch

12 Optical Fiber

14 Optical Fiber

15 16 Optical Change-over Member

32 35 Electrode

33 Hydrogen Storage Ingredient

34 Layer of Change-over Ingredient

[Translation done.]

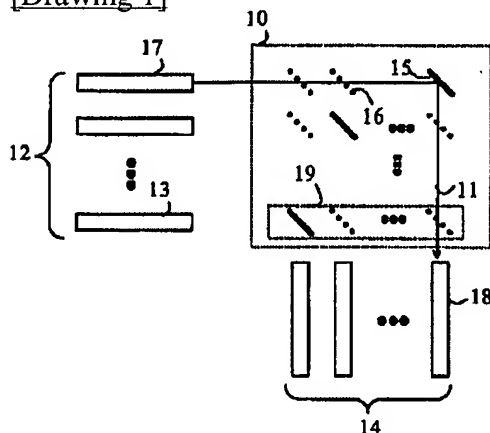
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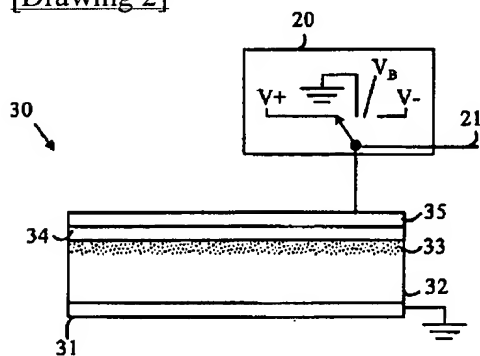
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DRAWINGS

[Drawing 1]



[Drawing 2]



[Translation done.]

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